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RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 5608
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 3668
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 8538
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 3547
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 4708
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 2827
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0458

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR RANDALL BUDDEN, PRM JESSICA YUTACOM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [SMIG](#) [BF](#)

SUBJECT: BAHAMAS REQUEST FOR 2007 AMBASSADOR'S FUND FOR
REFUGEES

REF: A. STATE 27884

[1](#)B. 06 NASSAU 657

[1](#)C. 05 NASSAU 454

[1](#)D. 04 NASSAU 2336

[1](#)E. 06 NASSAU 1840

[1](#)1. Embassy Nassau requests \$20,000 for the Bahamas Human Rights Network for the development of a documentary film regarding the plight of stateless Haitian Migrants in The Bahamas (reftel A). The documentary would film a planned public forum on restricted rights of migrants in the Mud and Pigeon Pea areas of Abaco, The Bahamas, then follow up with individual interviews of several stateless members of the Haitian community.

[1](#)2. According to a 2006 IOM study, there are an estimated 30,000-60,000 Haitians in The Bahamas who "are not well integrated into Bahamian society." The study found distrust of authority by the Haitian community and claims of abuse of Haitians. As stated in the 2006 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in The Bahamas (HRR), "anti-Haitian prejudice and resentment regarding continued Haitian migration was common." Bahamian law enforcement has adopted increasingly harsh tactics to address growing migrant populations, including midnight raids of Haitian communities with questionable legal justification (reftel B). Because of the concentration of Haitian migrants, The Mud and Pigeon Pea are particular areas of serious ongoing concern in The Bahamas.

[1](#)3. The 2006 HRR also states: "children born to non-Bahamian parents or to a Bahamian mother and a non-Bahamian father do not automatically acquire citizenship. Locally born persons of foreign heritage must apply for citizenship during the year after their 18th birthday, sometimes waiting for many years for a government response. Some persons claimed that the short window for application, difficult documentary requirements, and the long waiting times created generations of persons without citizenship in any nation." According to local reports, the issue of statelessness is creating mounting dissatisfaction among young Haitian-Bahamians, leading to tensions in the migrant communities and the potential for a repeat of violence seen in past years (reftels C and D.)

[1](#)4. To address these concerns, Post consulted with several local NGO's and The Bahamian Department of Immigration. There is consensus that there is a lack of understanding and

empathy in Bahamian attitudes towards Haitian migrants, including a lack of understanding of the issue of statelessness and the importance of basic human rights for all persons regardless of place of origin. The Bahamas Human Rights Network (BHRN) has listed public awareness of statelessness and migrant rights issues as a top local priority. BHRN has requested funding to produce a documentary on the issue.

15. The documentary project is intended to open Haitian communities currently closed to the Bahamian public at large, showing the hardship and prejudice faced by stateless Haitians living in The Bahamas. Its goal is a better national understanding of the value of human rights for migrants and stateless persons, reducing the potential for violence in the Haitian communities. The documentary will film a public forum to be held by BHRN in the Mud and Pigeon Pea, entitled "Shackled Freedom: Immigrant Communities in Crisis" and focus on personal interviews with selected persons born and living in The Bahamas without citizenship in any nation. The documentary would be aired on local television, presented at a publicized local showing, and used as part of BHRN's ongoing educational activities.

16. BHRN was established in 2006 as a result of significant post effort and the funding of the 2006 Ambassador's Fund for Refugees (reftel E). BHRN is the leading Bahamian NGO supporting human rights for Haitians. BHRN would be the grantee and producer of the film, supported by Highway Video, a U.S.-based production company that has produced documentaries on topics including the child sex trade, world hunger and Hurricane Katrina. Highway Video has tentatively agreed to the proposed project and a \$20,000 budget for travel, filming and complete post-production, assuming

significant cost to support the project. The tentative budget is as follows:

Air and lodging for production team: \$4500
Local permitting: \$500
Film, lighting and other supplies: \$3500
Filming and on-site production costs: \$3000
Post-production and printing: \$4500
Promotion and distribution: \$5000

17. Post certifies that it has the authority and capacity to award a grant to the intended recipient before the end of the fiscal year. Post has consulted the appropriate watch lists and NGO guidelines and determined that the intended recipient is appropriate for the grant. The intended recipient, BHRN, currently conducts no direct refugee assistance programs providing opportunity for sexual exploitation related to IASC concerns, and does not therefore have a code of conduct specifically prohibiting such activities. If required as a condition of receiving a grant, despite its lack of IASC-related work, BHRN has agreed to adopt a code of conduct reflecting IASC's six core principles at its next meeting.

18. Post point of contact is Gregory A. Floyd, 242-322-1181 ext 4510, floydga@state.gov.
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